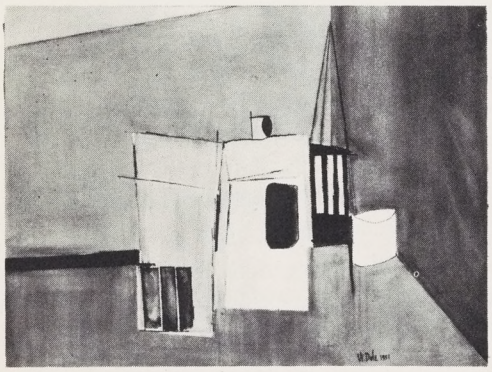
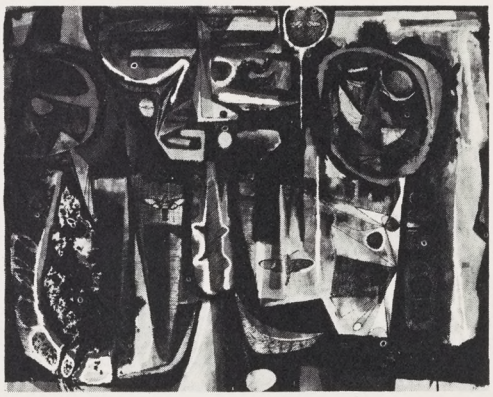
sfaa SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1953 · VOL. 19, NOS. 8 AND 9



William Dole: *"Pine Hall 100"* (watercolor). SFAA W/C Annual. Photo by S. F. Museum.



Irene Lagorio: *"Articles of Constraint"* (gouache and sumi) SFAA W/C Annual. Photo by S. F. Museum.

## A REPORT ON JURY PROCEDURE IN THE 1953 WATERCOLOR AND PASTEL ANNUAL—

### *With Some Statistics and Suggestions*

For some time I have been aware of a rather unhappy problem in the Artist Member body of the SFAA. This problem may be stated simply in this way: a good many members whose work is based on the objective approach, and whose work was once accepted more or less regularly in the Annuals, find that for some years they have been rejected. This has given rise to a belief among some that bias in favor of abstract and non-objective approaches is the cause of their rejection. A number, either believing this or discouraged by repeated rejections, have dropped their membership.

As Chairman of the Artist's Council I have been concerned about this situation. It is true that other opportunities to exhibit are offered Artist Members in the Member Show held at intervals at the de Young Museum and in the coming series of group shows to be held at the same museum. But these, I realize, do not suffice for those artists who once appeared in the Annuals, and are now rejected, as well as for other artists whose work stems from the objective approach and who do not make the Annuals. Unquestionably, acceptance by a jury for one of these top level shows carries a special kind of prestige that is naturally desired.

In considering the matter it seemed to me that the method of choosing juries, according to the By-Laws of the SFAA, precluded the possibility of bias over an extended period. Yet if some members believed this some effort should be made to get at the truth and bring it into the open.

How this might be done escaped me until recently when I was elected to serve on the jury for the 1953 Annual for Watercolor and Pastel. During the course of the judging it occurred to me that a report on the jury procedure and a simple analysis of the work entered might be of some help.

Just to get the process in order let me review how a jury comes into being. First of all, in a general meeting held each year members are nominated and elected for a certain number of Artist's Council seats (these change yearly in a series of rotations). Thus

the Artist's Council is brought into being by the majority choice of the artist membership present at the general meeting.

Considerably in advance of a scheduled Annual, the nominations for jury members are made in a regular meeting of the Artist's Council. Again, these nominations are sent out by mail to the artist members. The nominees receiving the highest number of votes compose the jury. Nominees need not be members of the Association.

Through this process the 1953 Watercolor and Pastel Annual jury was chosen. They were: Dorr Bothwell (Chairman since she received the highest number of votes), Ralph du Casse, Otis Oldfield, Elmer Bischoff and myself.

Kenneth Nack, an alternate, became a jury member when Bischoff was unable to serve. The three who received the highest number of votes, Dorr Bothwell, Ralph du Casse and I, comprised the Jury of Awards.

On the morning of September 21 the five of us met at the S. F. Museum and at about 10 a.m. began work.

The jury meeting opened with a statement by Dorr Bothwell, as chairman, that if there was no objection we would consider a work accepted that received four out of five votes, and rejected should it receive four negative votes. Three for and two against or two for and three against would place a work in the "doubtful" classification. All works in this category would receive a second appraisal when the total number of works had received consideration. There was unanimous approval for this method.

It was further agreed that aesthetic merit alone and *not approach* would determine acceptance or rejection.

Otis Oldfield mentioned that evidence of "personal integrity" in the work should be a determining factor. We knew what he meant though it was not easy to define in words. Later, by example, I will try to make clear what was intended.

For reviewing the work our situation was this: the five of us were seated on chairs in a row facing a panel equipped with a shelf on which the paintings were to be displayed, one by one. Voting was done by an electric device. Each juror held in his hand a switch connected to a central tabulating box placed on a table directly behind us. Each switch had three positions: (1) red, "negative," (2) green, "positive" and (3) the "off" position. The box showed the vote indications by green and red lights.

Before the tabulating box sat Miss Barbara Fitzwilliams, the Acting Registrar, with an indexed book of entries beside her ready to read off and note the results of votes on each entry. An assistant with a like notebook, sat beside her for a double check accounting. Three young men assistants stood waiting the "go" signal to bring on the paintings.

The total to consider, we were told, was 425 paintings! The limits of the show were placed, roughly, at 60-80 paintings. We were also told that should the number of acceptable paintings be greater space would be found to accommodate them.

The word was given and the first painting was brought to the display board. The click of switches could be heard. Miss Fitzwilliams announced "rejected" and the painting was carried away.

Once under way the judging proceeded rapidly. It had to if we were to get through 425 paintings in one day.

Before the first painting was accepted quite a stack of rejections had piled up.

This is a good place to say that many rejected works, in all categories of approach, would not have been accepted in any kind of competently juried show. They were amateurish in the extreme and should never have been submitted. Yet many were beautifully and expensively framed and some, I learned later, came from distant points. By the end of the jury session I had come to wish there was some way of saving such amateurs the expense and disappointment they must incur. But how it would be done I have no idea.

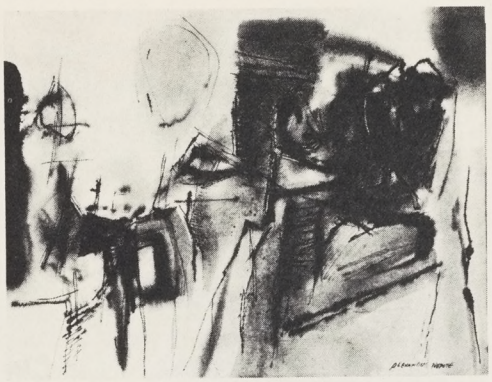
With the occasional "accepted" came more frequent "doubtful" classifications; and of course an ever increasing number of rejections.

There was a break for coffee around 11 a.m. and at noon we took an hour off for lunch. I think it was around 3 p.m. when we reached the 425th painting.

At the end of the first round we had accepted 38 works, classed 101 as "doubtful" and rejected 286. The breakdown on the "accepted" and "doubtful" categories was:

First round "accepted": 38, of which 35 were abstract or non-objective and 3 objective;

*(Continued on page 6)*



Alexander Nepote: "*Open Order*" (watercolor). SFAA W/C Annual. Photo by S. F. Museum.

## SPENCER MACKY LIFE MEMBER

The SFAA Board of Directors at its October meeting awarded an honorary life membership to Spencer Macky in recognition of his devoted service to the Art Association and to the California School of Fine Arts.

Mr. Macky was born in Auckland, New Zealand. He received his early art training in the National Gallery School of Painting, Melbourne. He later studied in Paris under Jean Paul Laurens at the Academie Julien. He studied in Italy, Ireland and England. He came to California in 1910. In 1912 Mr. Macky and his artist wife Constance opened their own school in the Studio Building on Post Street in San Francisco and later moved to the "Artists' Building" at 535 Sacramento Street. In 1917 Mr. Macky joined the regular faculty of the California School of Fine Arts. At the time he gave up his own school 70 of his students followed him to CSFA.

Mr. Macky has conducted classes at the California Art League, the San Francisco Architectural Club, the CSFA and at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. In 1944 he was appointed President of the California College of Arts and Crafts, which position he now occupies.

Mr. Macky was active in organizing the Artists' Council (or Committee on Exhibitions and Artists' Affairs) of the Art Association. He was professor of drawing and painting and dean of the faculty of the California School of Fine Arts for many years.

One of his former students remembers him as head of the Night School of CSFA and recalls him in these words: "Mr. Macky was not only a remarkable teacher, he has devoted his life to the indefinable beauty which is both on canvas and in people."

## LEE RANDOLPH LIFE MEMBER

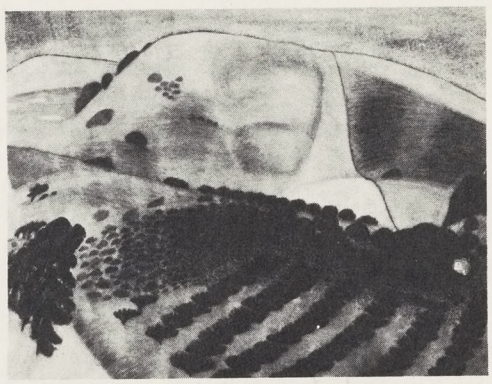
At its October meeting the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Art Association conferred an Honorary Life Membership upon Lee F. Randolph, artist member of the Association and director of the California School of Fine Arts from 1922 to 1942.

Mr. Randolph was born in Ravenna, Ohio and received his early art training at the Stevenson Art School in Pittsburgh, Pa. He later studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy, the Art Students League of New York, the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Academie Julien and Atelier Andre L'Hote in Paris. He traveled extensively in Italy, France and Algeria. His work has been exhibited in the Paris Salon, the International Exposition in Rome, the Chicago Art Institute, the Cincinnati Museum and in SFAA Annuals.

Mr. Randolph is represented in the following permanent collections: M. H. de Young Museum, the Albert M. Bender collection at the San Francisco Museum of Art, Utah Agricultural College and in the Luxembourg collection in Paris.

In 1914 he joined the faculty of the University of California and later served on the Board of Directors of the Art Association. In recent years he has resided in Carmel where he has conducted private classes in painting and drawing.

Mr. Randolph's work in the educational field has been outstanding. "He was progressive in his ideas and ideals and his own great interest always communicated itself to his students" is the way a former colleague expressed his admiration for Lee Randolph.



Margaret O'Keefe: "*Landscape*" (watercolor). SFAA W/C Annual. Photo by S. F. Museum.

## "AFTER THE HUNT"

*After the Hunt: William Harnett and Other American Still Life Painters, 1870-1900. By Alfred Frankenstein. University of California Press; 189 pp. and 137 plates.*

If such penetrating studies as Mr. Frankenstein's research continue to be made, we will soon know as much about American art as we now know about that of Europe.

Harnett was rediscovered by the art world in 1935, some forty years after his death. Recognized as the "most realistic painter of his age," his popularity was at its height during the 1880's and 1890's when his paintings were eagerly bought at high prices. He then fell into the oblivion that overtakes many painters who were popular favorites in their day. Perhaps one should say that he was discovered, rather than rediscovered, by the art world because the objective realism of his paintings had very limited appeal to contemporaneous critics. Today, however, he is recognized by both public and critics.

By 1947 more than one hundred paintings ascribed to Harnett had found places in museums and private collections but very little was known about the man whose name appeared on them. As Mr. Frankenstein studied these paintings, a number of puzzling problems were discovered; Harnett had apparently painted in two noticeably different styles throughout his career; he had failed to date some of his paintings, but two of them were dated after his death; and one painting, dated 1879, shows a five dollar bill of the 1880 series and a letter addressed to the Players Club, an organization founded in 1888. These discrepancies had passed unnoticed by a number of persons of high critical ability.

"After the Hunt" begins with a statement of the problem and its solution. As in other detective stories the solution was clear to the author long before he had sufficient facts at his command to convince others that all paintings in the two styles were separated. It became apparent that there were more than four times as many in the "hard" style as there were in the "soft." Those in the "hard" style showed a fanatical devotion to differences in the textures of the materials represented, had details that could not be fully appreciated without a microscope, and seldom indicated much spatial depth in the composition. Furthermore, while the signatures on the "hard" group were not obtrusive and were consistent with one another, the signatures on the other group tended to be large and in several styles. Eventually 126 Harnetts were accounted for and of these 102 paintings are known to exist. Sixty-nine forgeries by or of at least 35 different painters, only eight of whom are identifiable by name, were brought to light.

Much hitherto unavailable information of Harnett's life and paintings is brought together in a chapter full of detail. It comes as a surprise to learn that Harnett studied in art schools for seven years without touching oil paint and that he worked with unexpected rapidity, to single out but two of the many facts. Shorter chapters are devoted to John Frederick Peto and to John Haberle, painters whose work holds considerable interest today. In fact, severaly astute collectors unknowingly purchased paintings by Peto on which someone unknown had forged Harnett's name, and their pleasure in them has not been diminished by knowing the truth. Thus, whether or not Harnett should be considered as the most significant painter of this group deserves consideration. Other chapters discuss briefly a number of painters who painted in somewhat similar manners. The book closes with a detailed, critical catalogue of the work of Harnett.

Unlike most scholars who report their research in art history, Mr. Frankenstein embodies in his writing the enthusiasm with which he pursued his study. He takes the reader hand in hand through the procedures he followed in such detail that one wonders at times if the book should have been titled "During the Hunt." To some readers who are thoroughly familiar with the methodology of art research the space given to the means by which this detection was accomplished will seem an unnecessary intrusion. To other readers, and these are in the majority, this approach will give them their first insights into the solving of problems in art history. Whether or not one agrees with the way the author has presented his findings, the result is stimulating reading and a welcome relief from the pedestrian dullness that regrettably makes historical research in art of interest to but a few.

Leaving to the last what first greets the reader is the handsome production of the book. The reproductions are large and well printed and the book as a whole is a visual pleasure.

—RAY FAULKNER

*Dr. Faulkner is Executive Head of the Department of Art and Architecture of Stanford University.*



Maurice Lapp: *"Houses by the Sea"* (opaque watercolor). SFAA W/C Annual.
Photo by S. F. Museum.

## ART ASSOCIATION NOTES

We welcome Artist Members Guiomar d' Angulo, Wayne Chezem, Daphne Cook, Buff Haney, Burke Lucas, William Byron McClintock, Frances Moyer, and Theodore C. Polos; and Associate Artist Members Harriet C. Nelson and David Tolerton; and Lay Member Miss Alta C. Nolan.

In addition to the customary prizes being offered in the Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture we announce a $50 Alumni Award and a $25 prize from Mr. Wallace Kibbee.

## SFAA GROUP AT DE YOUNG

November 19th was the opening of Show Number 1 at the de Young Memorial Museum. The exhibition marks the first in a series of group shows by elected Artist Members. Included in the current exhibit are: Kisa Beeck, sculpture; Rex Ashlock, painting; Marian Clark Cooch, painting; and Fred Martin, painting. Each is represented with six pieces.

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We note with deep regret the deaths of three of the Art Association's active supporters—Mrs. Marcus Koshland, Mr. Henry F. Dutton and Mr. Eric Mendelsohn.

## THE MEMBERS EXHIBIT!

The 1953 Designer Craftsmen show at the Brooklyn Museum included the following members from the West Coast: Florence Walter, lay member, was awarded third prize in leather for bookbinding; Esther Bruton was represented with a mosaic, "Ghost Tree" and Mary A. Dumas with a batik silk wall hanging.

"The Entire Family," title of a sculptural group by Zygmund Sazevich has been commissioned by Earl Liever for his Los Altos office.

Sculpture and drawings by Adaline Kent were on view Oct. 26th-Nov. 14th. in New York at the Betty Parsons Gallery.

Fred T. Martin writes from Maxwell, California, that he has published an article in the College Art Journal for Summer 1953, titled "Aspects of Value in Contemporary Painting."

Paintings by Rex Ashlock were on view during October at the Lucien Labaudt Art Gallery.

Emmy Lou Packard has an exhibition of watercolors currently at Gump's Gallery.

Paintings by Walter Kuhlman were exhibited during October at the Area Arts Gallery. Robert McChesney has a current exhibit of his paintings at the San Francisco Museum of Art, Nov. 17th-Dec. 6th.

A three-man show of paintings by Victor Arnautoff, George Post and Gerald Wasserman is on exhibition at the Rotunda Gallery, Nov. 7th-Nov. 30th.

Ethel Pearce Nerger had an exhibition of paintings and Muriel Branegan Bacon of watercolors at the Rotunda Gallery, Oct. 14th-Nov. 4th.

The following members exhibited in the State Fair: Ruth Armer, Nell Sinton, Leah Rinne Hamilton, Joy Cain, Gail Cole, Emmy Lou Packard, and Emiko Nakano, each with paintings. Elah Hale Hays exhibited sculpture.

Prize winners in the San Francisco Women Artists 28th Annual Exhibition include the following members: Buff Hanney, Edna Stoddart, Emiko Nakano, Edith M. Smith, Nancy Genn and Elizabeth Mailliard; and Associate members: Alice Finney, Nancy McRae and Frances Young.

*(Continued from page 2)*

"doubtful" 101, of which 69 were abstract or non-objective and 32 objective.

It may be noted here that the breakdown in approach of all artists submitting was: 204 sent abstract or non-objective works, while 111 sent objective works.

For myself I would guess, roughly, that I voted contrary to the general vote perhaps 10% to 15% of the time. As the time passed I came to the conclusion that we were within very close limits of agreement on what was acceptable, what was possible and what was not acceptable. Since I was trying to be very fair in my appraisals I was heartened by my feeling of a reasonably common attitude.

I might say here that among the rejected works were about three that all of us felt could have been at least "doubtful" had they not been so badly framed. In these, and in many others rejected, some color of the picture had been picked up in the frame or the mat or both. Every member of the jury felt this was most unfortunate. Only one painting that I remember rose above such a handicap. (This should serve as a warning to future entrants in this Annual.)

With the first run through behind us we began consideration of the "doubtful" classification. We lined them up in groups of seven or eight along the wall and now considered each one in an open discussion. The "second look" often was all we needed to accept or reject a piece. On some there was give and take. But I would say that no jury member asked for more than a reasonable consideration for some work he liked especially.

About a few things there was a special kind of discussion. For instance, one very excellent "doubtful" was admired but was finally rejected. I think the basis of our vote stemmed from a feeling that the work was essentially graphic rather than painted even though it did employ color. However, another work which displayed a strong feeling of drawing was accepted because we felt, after some discussion and consideration, that it measured up to the standards of aesthetic fitness we appeared to have set.

One other example may define what was meant by "personal integrity." In this case two works by the same artist were up for consideration (this was again in our review of "doubtful" works). They were both primitive in approach. My first appraisal led me to believe they were true primitives but after some discussion and close scrutiny we all came to the conclusion that the composition, the color and the drawing were just a little too sophisticated to be other than contrived. We felt this did not constitute "personal integrity" in the artist and the work was rejected.

When we had made our final decisions on the 101 works in the "doubtful" group we had accepted, out of that total: 35 paintings —29 abstract or non-objective—6 objective. As a final total the juried works accepted were: 67 abstract or non-objective and 9 objective, a total of 76 paintings.

When the work was done every member of the jury admitted exhaustion. I know every one of us felt a great responsibility toward pulling out of the entries the very best possible show. And I felt then and do now that the jury was as fair as any jury can be. And I think the jury was reasonably well balanced.

How then account for the disproportionate advantage of abstract and non-objective acceptances over the objective? This is my answer: from what I saw throughout the entries in this show I would say it was because the evidence of vitality, imagination, and organization, in short the aesthetic impact, was definitely more pronounced on the side of the abstract and non-objective painters. Even though I went on the jury predisposed in favor of an equal break for the objective painters I doubt, had I been left to pick the show alone, that I would have included a much greater percentage of objective works. The rest of the jury I am sure, even as I, were looking for those works which carried the greatest aesthetic impact. No sincere panel could do less.

This does not mean that the objective approach would better be forgotten. On the contrary. We have enough good works by objective painters in this Annual to prove that there is a place for such work. In fact, these is no telling when a shift of enthusiasm, interest, vitality, and imagination may bring new objective or other approaches, into the ascendency.

I would like to make one suggestion for a minor change in jury procedure: The classification of "doubtful" should be changed to "possible." When, during judging, a painting is placed in this category a red penciled "P" should be placed on the entry tab. Should this work be finally rejected the art-

ist would know, at least, that his painting had reached the semi-final round. Perhaps this would be of some help in establishing a better morale among those whose works came close to making the show. As it is now the artist has no way of knowing.

Barbara Fitzwilliams got together the figures presented here and all thanks are due her for her work. Here are some more tabulations which may be of interest in a geographic sense:

| *Artists Entered* | *Locality* | *Accepted* |
|---|---|---|
| 225 | Bay Area (including Monterey) (20 S. F., 19 Eastbay) | 45 |
| 29 | Los Angeles and environs | 7 |
| 2 | San Diego | 1 |
| 29 | Other California localities | 7 |
| 16 | Western States | 2 |
| 12 | Eastern States | 3 |
| 2 | Canada | none |

The states included: Idaho, Illinois (2), Iowa, Kansas, Michigan (3), Nevada (3), Oregon, Washington (3), Wisconsin (1), Manitoba, Canada (2).

—SQUIRE KNOWLES

## CHRISTMAS FAIR AND FROLIC

Need something red and green and Christmasy for your door? Or something in free form like nothing anyone else ever saw? Do you hesitate about giving one of your own paintings or sculpture to a friend who probably won't appreciate it anyhow? And what about that woman who simply has everything?

The SFAA Women's Auxiliary has your answer. You will find it at their Frolic and Fair on December 8, 5 to 7 p.m., 800 Chestnut Street. Decorations, fine examples of the fine arts and gifts for the most gifted will be available as will refreshments (not of the home-made cake variety).

If you are a CSFA student in need, fashion a fashionable what-not and the Auxiliary will see that you get the full price if they sell it.

The Frolic committee includes Mrs. Oran Grossman, chairman; Mrs. Richard Ham, invitations; Mrs. Prentis Cobb Hale, refreshments; Mrs. Richard Oddie, publicity; Mrs. Thomas Page, sales and Mrs. Joseph O'Connor, decorations.

## "LET'S GO TO ART SCHOOL"

California School of Fine Arts has made a movie of, for and by itself. Titled "Let's Go To Art School" the film has caught spontaneously and with charm the idea of what this school and its students are doing.

The film depicts instructors and students in their daily and evening classes. It begins with the building itself and grounds at 800 Chestnut street on San Francisco's Russian Hill. You go with the student from studio to studio, lecture to lecture. You watch students of each department at work creating their finished product—painting, sculpture, ceramic, photography, jewelry, lithography, silkscreen, layout and all that CSFA presents. Viewers are given an excellent idea of what it takes to be an artist and to enter a professional career in the arts.

The musical score complements the film. The music was composed by Richard Culvig and consists of viola, flute and piano.

Let's Go To Art School is narrated by Director Ernest Mundt. David Meyers is photographer and editor, assisted by the School department of photography. Robert Katz served as general advisor in collaboration with the faculty, staff and students.

You want to see it, soon? Its world premier will be the evening of December 8th at the SFAA Women's Auxiliary party, to be held at 800 Chestnut street.

Thanks are due the Women's Auxiliary and the CSFA Alumni Association who financed the film for the School.

## SCHOOL NOTES

Kenneth Nack, CSFA instructor, has been named one of San Francisco's 100 outstanding young newmakers of tomorrow by Time magazine.

## ALUMNI NOTES

The CSFA Alumni exhibition of paintings is currently on view in the CSFA Gallery.

At its recent meeting the Alumni announced donation of a $50 prize to be awarded only to a paid member of the Alumni Association in the next Art Association Painting and Sculpture Annual.

The next regular business meeting of the group will be held in January.

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